

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-07
TRSE-00 OMB-01 /066 W
-----071925Z 106632 /47

R 071821Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9285
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
SECDEF

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 00339

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR' CY, UK
SUBJECT: GUARDIAN ARTICLE ON RETENTION OF BRITISH BASES
IN CYPRUS

1. GUARDIAN OF JANUARY 7 CONTAINS AN ARTICLE FROM NICOSIA BY JOHN BIERMAN BASED ON EVIDENTLY BRIEF INTERVIEW THERE JANUARY 5 WITH BRITISH DEFENSE MINISTER MULLEY. BIERMAN QUESTIONED HIM ABOUT PLANS TO RETAIN BRITISH SOVEREIGN BASES IN CYPRUS, AND QUOTES MULLEY AS REPLYING "WE HAVE NO PLANS RADICALLY TO CHANGE THE SITUATION HERE" IN THIS RESPECT. BIERMAN SAYS THAT MULLEY INSISTED TO HIM THAT HIS 36-HOUR VISIT TO CYPRUS WAS A ROUTINE INSPECTION.
2. HOWEVER, BIERMAN NOTES THAT ANNUAL COST OF MAINTAINING THE BASES, 30 MILLION POUNDS STERLING PER YEAR, IS "ONE FIFTH OF THE TOTAL DEFENSE SAVINGS ORDERED BY MR. HEALEY FOR NEXT YEAR. THEY ARE TOTALLY EXTRANEEOUS TO BRITAIN'S REDUCED DEFENSE ROLE, AS NOW DEFINED, OF GUARDING THE UNITED KINGDOM AND ITS SEA APPROACHES. AND

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MAINTAINING ITS COMMITMENTS TO THE NATO CENTRAL FRONT." BIERMAN QUOTES MULLEY AS SAYING, "THEY ARE LESS IMPORTANT NOW THAT WE HAVE GIVEN UP OUR WORLDWIDE AND MIDDLE EAST ROLE, BUT POLITICALLY IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR US TO MAKE A MOVE."

3. BIERMAN THEN DESCRIBES THE BASES BRIEFLY, REFERRING

TO AKROTIRI AS A "VAST RAF BASE RUN BY A SKELETON STAFF"
AND STATES THAT IF BRITAIN PULLED OUT OF THE BASES, THE
TURKS WOULD IMMEDIATELY MOVE INTO DHEKELIA. HE THEN ASKS
RHETORICALLY IF TURKS COULD RISK ALLOWING AKROTIRI TO FALL
INTO HANDS OF GREEK AF.

4. BIERMAN CONTINUES THAT THERE ARE OTHER FACTORS
MILITATING AGAINST BRITISH WITHDRAWAL, INCLUDING "THE

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AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
SECDEF

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 00339

FACILITY IN THE TROODOS MOUNTAINS WHERE A HIGHLY SECRET
RAF RADAR INSTALLATION MONITORS MOVEMENT THROUGHOUT THE
MIDDLE EAST AND EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN AND FEEDS THE IN-
FORMATION DIRECTLY INTO THE NATO INTELLIGENCE NETWORK";
THE ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE STATION AT AYIOS NICOLAOS
"WHICH PERFORMS A COMPLEMENTARY FUNCTION"; AND THE USE OF
AKROTIRI "BY THE USAF U-2 RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT, WHICH
MAKES DAILY FLIGHTS OVER THE SINAI".

5. BIERMAN CONCLUDES THAT WHEN HE PRESSED MULLEY TO
STATE CATEGORICALLY THAT BRITAIN WILL NOT LEAVE UNLESS
AND UNTIL GREEKS AND TURKS SETTLE CYPRUS DISPUTE, MULLEY
REPLIED, "IT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME TO SAY. THESE MATTERS
ARE MUCH MORE IN THE DIPLOMATIC THAN IN THE DEFENSE

FIELD."

6. COMMENT: AS PER OUR INSTRUCTIONS WE HAVE NOT ASKED
OUR BRITISH COUNTERPARTS FOR COMMENT ON THIS ARTICLE.
HOWEVER, WE ASSUME THAT MULLEY MUST BE TAKING A HARD
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LOOK AT THE COST OF THE CYPRUS BASES WHILE HE IS FIGURING
OUT WHERE TO CUT BACK ANOTHER 200 MILLION POUNDS IN HIS
DEFENSE BUDGET.

ARMSTRONG

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Message Attributes

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